support to teachers etc. On the other hand, several interventions aim at improving the demand for schooling through community mobilization, special interventions for enrolment and retention fo vulnerable groups of children including girls and children of weaker sections. Measures are also being undertaken to strengthen the accountability of the schools system towards parents and community. The Mid-Day Meals Scheme that provides a cooked meal to all children of primary schools and alternative education centers has also helped in checking dropouts.

Drop-outs Andhra Pradesh

756. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is little difference in the school dropout rate in Andhra Pradesh from the year 2001-02 onwards in primary, secondary and at senior secondary level;

(b) whether it is also a fact that dropout rate of girls is more in comparison to boys for the same period in spite of having so many schemes, including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan;

(c) if so, the steps Government are contemplating to reduce this percentage in the State; and

(d) the reason for low enrolment of students, particularly in rural areas, in the State when compared to other States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Drop-out rates (provisional) for Andhra Pradesh for Classes I-V, Classes I-VIII and Classes I-X from 2001-02 to 2003-04 are given below:

	Classes I-V			Classes I-VIII			Classes I-X		
Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2001-02	42.6	43.5	43.0	61.3	65.2	63.1	68.5	72.0	70.1
2002-03	41.7	41.8	41.7	58.1	62.0	59.9	67.4	70.8	69.0
2003-04	42.4	42.8	42.6	57.9	61.8	59.8	65.1	68.5	66.7

Drop-out rates for senior secondary classes is not maintained by the Ministry.

(c) As stated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, State Government has taken the following measures for reducing dropouts:

* Sensitization of teachers/Head Masters on regular absentees/ working children of marginalized sections of Society.
* Relevant strategies towards the pedagogy of first generation learners.
* Sensitization of parents on continuation of their children and their attendance.
* Improvement of schools infrastructure and other facilities like provision of Mid-day Meal.
* Implementation of child centered activity based and playful pedagogy.
* Close and continuous monitoring by community and department.
* Discouraging repetitions and efforts for regular transition and actual completion rates.
* Regular attendance monitoring through Mandal Resource Persons.

(c) As stated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, main reasons for low enrolment in rural areas are illiteracy of parents, lack of community awareness and mobilization for enrolment to the expected level.

Performance of mid-day meal scheme

757. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the twin objectives of the Central Government scheme to increase the number of school going children and to provide nutritious food in the mid-day meals has not achieved desired results throughout country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government to achieve the twin objectives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Under the revised Mid-Day Meal Scheme, effected from September, 2004, cooked food of minimum 300 calories with 8-12 grams